THE

"HINDU MESSAGE"

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems from the Hindu Standpoint.

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VOL. 3.] THURSDAY DECEMBER 26, 1918. [No. 10.

The **Hindu Message** stands for

(1) The Maintenance of British supremacy with self-government for India,

(2) Co-operation with the different communities of India without prejudice to Hindu Dharma,

(3) Education of the Hindus as an integral part of the Indian Nation,

(4) Advancement of Material prosperity on a spiritual basis and

(5) Dissemination of pure Hindu Culture.

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Postage As. 13. Extra.
Single copy As. 2 only.

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A Vision Of India.

BHARADWAJA'S ASRAMA.

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

And here Bhar'dwaja's Asram smiling shone
Where slowly moving up devotion's height
He saw the Effulgent and Supernal Light
Which dispels grief and sin by its bright dawn.
His love compelled the tiger and the awn
To cease their hatred by compassion's might.
He gave to pupils true a second sight
To see upon heart's lotus brood the Swan.
Towards his life's harmonious perfect close
He had as his lifelong devotion's fruit
In his small hut the touch of Rama's feet—
Which was the fragrance of his prayer's rose,
The song divine from his sweet worship's lute,
The sun which did his love's true vigils greet

The Hindu Message

THURSDAY EVENING 26, DEC., 1918.

H. E. Lord Chelmsford at the Calcutta University.

His Excellency the Viceroy, who is the Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, presided at the year's Convocation on Monday the 16th inst. and delivered a speech which is in consonance with all that we know of him already as one whole-heartedly devoted to the discharge of his duties and to what he conceives to be the true interests of the people of this country. He devoted his speech mainly to two topics of general interest,—*first*, to the problems of education that have to be faced under the existing conditions of the country; *secondly*, to an exhortation to the new graduates regarding what he considered the lessons of the war,—lessons which have to be borne in mind by Indian youths in all parts of the country in order that they might be enabled "to tackle the problems of life honestly and effectively." He also referred casually to some other topics.

As regards education, His Excellency held that "education lies at the root of most of our difficulties, and if we are to advance surely along the path of constitutional reform, we must see to it that we put our educational system on the soundest basis." His Excellency referred to the historical fact that our Indian Universities were all founded on the model of the London University,—that our Universities began by being affiliating and examining bodies, and only later on—a great many years later,—they grafted upon themselves the function of teaching. His Excellency said:—"Such a material change could not be effected from within, that external help was necessary if true reform was to be effected on right lines." It is clearly to secure such help that the Sadler Commission has been appointed. What reforms the Commission has proposed is unknown to the public as yet. Evidently His Excellency anticipates some opposition. Otherwise we do not see why he should already feel the need to "ask those who feel constrained to take up an attitude of dissent to weigh carefully the questions at issue as a whole before they make up their minds." One thing is certain,—*viz.*, that His Excellency is intensely earnest on the question of University Reform. For he informed his audience that, "if the members of the Commission are unanimous in their main recommendations I shall lose no time in giving effect to them." For, "it would be futile to appoint a Commission of such strength and eminence and then pigeonhole their suggestions." The *main* difficulty to be faced not only in Bengal, but throughout the country is,—*not* that "one governing body" is not competent to undertake the control and care of many thousands of students and hundreds of affiliated institutions, though this matter is certainly deserving of serious and anxious consideration,—but, that they have been compelled during half a century and more to "follow purely literary courses which lead only to legal and clerical careers." For all the half-a-century and more that our Indian Universities have lasted since their foundation, the absurdity and evil

effects of this policy have been pointed out by discerning men, Indian and European ; and still there has been on the part of the bureaucracy, which has been responsible for Indian administration and which has gained the reputation of being "heaven-born," no consciousness of the need of a change and therefore no desire of making an attempt at reform and reconstruction. His Excellency seems to justify the bureaucracy when he says that the reform and reconstruction "could not be effected from within." New Universities arose in Great Britain and were built on a model better suited to modern requirements. Our rulers here could have either introduced reforms into the existing University,—or, if that were not possible, they might have founded a new University in a provincial town like Trichinopoly or Madura on an improved model like what the Birmingham, Manchester, or Glasgow University has been since its foundation. The truth is that the bureaucracy has never been able to rise above the old mediæval creed that "trade follows the flag." The British flag has even allowed the brutal Germans to dump their cheap bounty-fed goods in the Indian markets to the ruin of Indian weavers and others. We feel quite sure that it is the war that has melted the hearts of our rulers to some extent, and we have moreover to acknowledge our indebtedness to the statesmanship and foresight of His Excellency the Viceroy himself. We trust that, now at least, the Calcutta and all other Indian Universities will be fully overhauled and adapted to the new conditions and requirements of the present age. The purely literary studies and degrees must be reduced to their deserved insignificance. The technical studies and degrees must gain a corresponding advance in the patronage of the government and the public, and everyone desirous of acquiring his livelihood without becoming a lawyer or clerk must be given the opportunity of learning some kind of business or industry so as to lead a life of honourable usefulness. His Excellency said that "the time is ripe for reform in this matter." We think that the same has been true for at least 30 years, and it would be surprising if he learns how even attempts made by the Indian public to make small beginnings in technical education have been thwarted and the funds subscribed by them cruelly diverted for other purposes,—witness, for example, how the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute Fund subscribed by the people of Tanjore District in 1887 was diverted to the building of a Hostel in connection with a Government educational institution in that District.

His Excellency also referred to the work of the Industrial Commission. He said :—"We want Indian men, and not Indian men only as labourers, but as leaders who will turn their attention to industrial enterprise and equip themselves for a great industrial regeneration in India. We want to divert some of the great stream of students which now pours into channels leading only to the clerical and legal professions into channels which will lead to industrial and commercial enterprise." His Excellency rightly stated,—"It is men that we want to do this thing. If the men are forthcoming there will be no difficulty about money." The men have never been wanting in a country

so populous as ours. What they have asked for in vain is the training in Western methods of work and organisation. The objection hurled against the Indian demand has uniformly been that India has no capital, and British capital cannot be found to help purely Indian organisation of industry. Especially has it been stated that, as the administration passes more largely into Indian hands or under Indian initiative even though still largely manned and conducted by Europeans, European Capital will feel more shy than ever in seeking opportunities of investment in India. At last we have His Excellency Lord Chelmsford's refreshing candour in making the acknowledgment that no such catastrophe will happen. He said, "Capital will go where it sees possibilities of advantageous use. I have every confidence that we shall see this industrial renaissance come about, and where could it be more fitly inaugurated than in this, the premier University in India?" If technical education be pushed forward and if it is given to the highest standard attainable and necessary, there will be no difficulty in the employment to any extent of the capital available to us. For, when once our men are equipped with the training they need, their knowledge and energy will easily find the outlet they need and provide the necessary organisation for utilising the resources which are available to them. His Excellency wants "to obtain" our co-operation. We say that it has long been assured to our rulers,—for at least over a generation, if not even for the last half a century.

His Excellency then proceeded to address an exhortation to the graduates before him regarding "the lessons of the war," as he called them. He first dwelt on the evils of the German temper and view of life. He said that their system of education and even their national life became "tainted by false aspirations and visions." He summed these up in the phrase,—"the subordination of all knowledge to the service of lawless force." This is a lesson *which some* of our new men perhaps need,—not only in Calcutta, but even in South India, where we have had the pain to witness the use of violence and the barbarism which rejoices at it for the advancement of petty partisan or sectional interests. His Excellency very rightly and thoughtfully said :—"Maintain the peace, but maintain also the common rights of man." In the *second* place, His Excellency advocated the importance of what he called "the sense of discipline." To Indian minds, this exhortation must carry an instantaneous appeal and acquiescence. The Indian doctrine of Karma is nothing but a gospel of discipline leading to *Chitta suddhi*,,—the freeing of the mind of selfish ideals and irrational impulses. His Excellency put forth the example of the British army for imitation, and in our view there can be none nobler or worthier of imitation. "Unity, discipline, and I may add, loyalty have been the instruments through which the good cause has triumphed," said His Excellency, referring to the immortal work done by the British Army in the battle-fields of France and Belgium We trust that Indians young and old, will for ever bear this noble exhortation in mind, and go forward to achieve the work of national progress and elevation in India. Indians are generally lacking in all these three

essential qualities which contribute to national elevation. Their imperfection in these respects is due, chiefly, to the absence of opportunities for their display in the pursuit of great public and national aims. His Excellency himself said that those qualities were "not to be acquired in a day nor without serious and consistent endeavour," —and that "whether in Europe or in India." It is with Indians of young age that the future of their great and holy land lies. Let them lay to heart His Excellency's concluding words of wise admonition,—"I can assure you that especially in the plastic period of youth no daily occurrence is too trivial, no action is too small for the gradual welding together of that superlatively important fabric of human character." His Excellency also significantly placed before the Indian graduates the inspiring example of the life of the eminent Indian just departed,—Sir Gurudas Banerjee.

Mrs. Besant and Her Admirers.

Mrs. Besant expresses her "gratitude" for the "warm appreciation" of her work and leadership expressed by a meeting of her admirers at the Gokhale Hall on Saturduy, the 14th inst. The Hall is her own creation, and her statue is appropriately placed there. Excepting the venerable Indian statesman in the Chair whose gracious and dignified courtesy can only be equalled by his commanding intellectual power, and two or three others, the audience was composed mainly of theosophists,—if we are to judge from the list of names given in the *New India* report. Dr. Subramania Iyer said that "she made up her mind to catch him (*i. e.*, Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer) and she verily did it." We dare say that she has similarly "caught" many another Indian fish in her net. The wonder is that so few have been caught, as we can see from the absence of most of the well-known Madras men, young and old, from so important a meeting. Those that were present spoke very warmly of Mrs. Besant's career,—so warmly as immediately to call forth her "gratitude," and a promise to "strive" in the future to improve upon her "poor best in the past." Still, one ought not to fail to note the fact that there was a striking and significant absence of interest in the occasion among the people of Madras and its leading men. It is well to understand the phenomenon, and its value and meaning for India.

The two great and fruitful ideas for which Indian religion and civilisation have stood during all the immense epochs of past time are peace (*santi*) and freedom from the bondage of material life (*mukti*). In fact we may say that the two ideas are one, and can sum up both into a single one, *viz.*, the peace of liberation. Our social organisation which is altogether unique in the world has withstood the storms and blows which have vehemently struck against it in never-ending succession in the course of ages. Mrs. Besant herself once described what she called "her work in India" as "an attempt to reinvigorate the ancient Aryan ideals as against those of Western civilisation, and to inspire Indians with aspiration towards spiritual evolution as against the desire for material progress. Simplicity in material life and richness in intellectual and spiritual life have been the burden of my song in all parts of

India, and I am trying to win the noblest of the Brahman type to abandon the race for political and social rewards and to devote themselves to a loftier task—the spiritual regeneration of their country." And again:—"If I refuse to work in a field (*i. e.*, social and political life) to which so many are giving unselfish labour, it is because I honestly believe that the future of India, the greatness of India, and the happiness of her people can *never* be secured by political methods, but only by the revival of her philosophy and religion. To this, therefore, I must give all my energies, and I must refuse to spread them over other fields She also used to end all her works with the formula and aspiration,—"Peace to all beings." All this longing for spiritual peace and regeneration are of the past. Like her work for *secularism* in England before she came out to India, her work for Indian *spiritualism* and spiritual peace has vanished into the void.

What has she achieved during the last six years? In the *first* place, the Indian National Congress had worked during many years,—not without success. For we had had two stages of progress,—*first*, Lord Cross's Bill, and *secondly*, Lord Morley's Reform Bill. Mrs. Besant's entry into politics and the foundation of the Home Rule organisation are believed to have greatly advanced the Indian national cause. Her admirers claim that India owes to her what the venerable Chairman who unveiled her statue at the Gokhale Hall, called "the Proclamation of August 20, of 1917." We beg to differ, and are inclined to attribute it to the share which India has taken along with Great Britain and her Colonies and Dominions in undergoing the common sacrifices and enduring the common hardships of the world-war now happily ended. Let us pass for the present over this difference in the interpretation of recent events, and look at the result of Mrs. Besant's entry into the field of Indian politics with the unfurling of the flag of Home Rule. What we are actually going to get from the British Ministry and Parliament is still uncertain and unforeseen. But we have the constant bickerings between the bureaucracy and the popular leaders,—the perpetual rending of the air by the attacks of non-Brahmin agitators on the Brahmins,—the ceaseless party quarrels between Congressmen and the Secessionists and their separate organisations and Conferences. In Madras itself, we have had the ceaseless quarrels arising from the Madura and Conjeeveram Conferences, and the ceaseless quarrels on the question of Education.

Let us turn from politics to society. We have already referred to the envenomed attacks which are being levelled by various non-Brahmins against the Brahmins. Both communities had for ages lived together in peace and rendered common services to the cause of the holy mother-land and her religions all of which had sprung from the holy Vedas as their fountain-head. As the learned and brilliant Advocate General pointed out the other day:—"Both the great communities had been from time immemorial good friends. They had jointly worked for the good of India." But this harmony has now been replaced by ill-will and resentment on the side of several non-Brahmins, if not all, against the Brahmins. We

cannot, of course, throw the blame of the present ill-feeling of the non-Brahmins towards the Brahmins entirely on Mrs. Besant. But it is a fact that she signalised her passage from her unfruitful theosophical field of work into the political field so fruitful of glories and triumphs, as the event has shown, by her lecture on "the passing of the caste system," in which she wants to take "the steps which shall abolish the distinctions of caste" and asks,—"will you wait until the surging wave of prejudice and anger, rising higher, higher, higher, sweeps you all away against your will? "She also speaks of "sacrificing our privileges." What privileges have the Brahmins now in the land? She is evidently referring to the custom which prevents interdining and intermarriages. The truth is that some Western people are very sensitive, and think they are slighted if Indians refuse to dine with them. But even today there are various conventions even in England with regard to dining and marriage. Caste is something like an Indian equivalent for the conventions of civilisation and society in the West. The only difference is that, while the latter have a material and social significance, the former have a religious and spiritual significance. An English writer has remarked that "material civilisation is a thing not of conscious contrivance and deliberate legislation, but an impulse to national history and national character." Not only is this true of the complex conventionalities of European civilisation, but it is also true of the institution of caste which in India takes the place of the fashions and conventions of Western society. Caste, too, like the conventions of Western civilisation, changes with the course of time, but it cannot be destroyed or "abolished"—as Mrs. Besant wants us to do—without destroying the essential basis of Indian society as moulded by long-standing hereditary impulses. Indian caste is sure to adjust itself, as it is already doing, in response to our new conditions, but all revolutionary attempts to "abolish" or destroy it, are bound to fail. In the *second* place, we have recently brought among us the conflict between labourers and capitalists. One of the leaders of the new labour movement said recently at a meeting presided over by Mrs. Besant:—"Grant for one moment that the labourers are wrong and Messrs. Binny and Co., are right, which they are not. But it seems to me our duty as Indians is to stand by our brothers." It is the appearance of Mr. Andrews on the scene just at the nick of time and after nearly 3 weeks of trouble, struggle, and unemployment, that has brought to these distracted poor workmen in Madras, peace and return to employment.

We have mentioned above the various forms of conflict and disturbance that have arisen among us in recent years. We do not say that Mrs. Besant is responsible for their introduction and working in our midst and for all the disadvantages, social and other, arising from them. It is her admirers who claim that she has been the leader in all the recent political, social, educational, labour, and other movements. Dr. Subramania Iyer said so in his speech at the ceremony for unveiling Mrs. Besant's statue in the Gokhale Hall. But all the various conflicts, disturbances, troubles which we have men-

tioned above have arisen also within these few years since she rushed into secular concerns in India with her consuming energy. In her "thanks" to her admirers (see *New India* of December 16, 1918) she says:—"I have done my poor best in the past, and will strive to better that past best in the future." We have no power or desire to prevent her doing what she likes to do. But we are full of disappointment on account of the conflicts and disturbances which distract the minds of all men today, and we long for the spiritual peace and harmony which brought happiness and unity to Hindu society in the past. We trust that Mrs. Besant will turn her energies to work which will promote "peace to all beings" and put an end to the present troubles and distractions. India has ever been the land of peace and holiness; and if modern civilisation with its ceaseless conflicts of all kinds is brought into this land, we shall certainly lose all that have been of value to us and to the world during our past history. Let us hope that Indian leaders at least will strive to be faithful to the truly Indian ideals of the Vedic sages while at the same time working for our political and industrial revival under the protecting aegis of British rule.

Notes and Comments.

Our new men must not fail to note how the new women of the West are being affected and changed for the worse when they take to masculine occupations under the changed conditions of society and of industry created by the War. One Mrs. Aria writes as follows in one of the current monthlies, the *Fortinghtly Review*:—"Now when women's gentle influence dominates the 'bus and the tram she seems to take a certain pride in aping the no-manners of her masculine predecessor."... "Assuredly she is no cleaner"...she was justly described as "*soiled and sulky*". So long as woman's energies are confined to the home as the just and legitimate sphere of her work and influence, she can cultivate the gentleness and grace for which her sex has been noted everywhere in civilised society and which contributes so much to the happiness of life. But when once she enters into competition with man in the busy out-door life of the world, she must feel the influence of the revolutionary melting pot, get charred and chagrined, and lose her charm and serenity. Already, it is patent how our new women *here* are changing under the guidance of those women of the West whose benevolence has induced them to reside here in order to scatter the blessings of civilisation.

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The following statement regarding shipbuilding in the United States is really calculated to take away one's breath:—"Already the Americans have outpaced the British yards in construction; the United States has this year put in commission more tonnage than the United Kingdom, hitherto supreme in the shipbuilding industry." The Chairman of the American Shipping Board has also said:—"We will have 25,000,000 tons of merchant ships or the equivalent of England's mercantile marine, which is the largest... It is not only our big opportunity for holding our own in shipping competition, but it is *the only business-like way to build up foreign* trade." We have never believed that the United States' motive in entering into the War was altogether the philanthropic one of securing "self-determination" for all peoples. She wants "to build up foreign trade." It is this competition in trade that finally made the German nation mad and led them to their present ruin. It has been well said of Germany:—"She confronts the world, isolated, distraught, miserable, and bankrupt,—an out-caste among the nations,"—and this before the defeat which has overwhelmed her people in dire disgrace and damnation. Let us hope that America will learn from the fate of Germany not to embark on a

policy of "building up foreign trade," but to build up her own domestic trade and to live happily within her vast territory by adhering to her Monroe doctrine, especially in mercantile matters. The British Empire can look after the freedom of the seas in the future, as it has done during the War. It will be an evil day for humanity if the United States should resolve to "build up her foreign trade" and enter into a determined competition with the rest of the civilised world for the gaining of that end.

* * *

So long as each Indian Village community was left unmolested to solve its own food problem there was no "food problem" at all to solve. Why should not each European country produce its own food? Why should they import food from abroad and ruin the industries of other countries in order to over fill their own stomachs and purses? England imports 75 per cent of her food-stuffs from foreign countries, and hence her tonnage is to her a matter of life and death. "Tonnage means victory," as Mr. Lloyd-George said. So both her domestic abundance in food and her power in the world which is matchless are due to her naval superiority to all other nations. If other nations like the United States begin to compete with her, that will only bring on trouble. There is no possibility of approaching Great Britain in this respect. Hence, the nations which will soon meet at "the peace table" should resolve not to enter into competition with her, if they would abolish war or build up a true League of Nations. As for India, she only wants to be left to develop her industries, and not to "build up a foreign trade" or enter into a competition with any one in order to rise to prosperity within her own shores. We trust that India's delegates at the Peace Conference will make every effort to secure her peacefal internal development in industry.

* * *

It has been said that "he who dominates the coal and iron industries dominates the world." If it is true that European coal fields "are unimportant if compared with the gigantic deposits of North America" and if the consequence of this predominance is that "North America is likely to become not only the world's principal seat of the manufacturing industries and of wealth, but the world's principal centre of population and of military power as well,"—then we need not wonder that the United States wants "to build up foreign trade." If any European or Asiatic power thwarts her in the attempt, another great military struggle will surely arise. So all the present talk about abolishing war seems to us to be insincere,—whether it proceeds from America or Europe.

* * *

The writer quoted in the preceding paragraph says:—"An iron and coal producing India would obviously be infinitely more valuable than an India producing rice and millet, cattle and cotton." But, so far as at present known, India's coal resources amount only to a minute fraction—about one-sixtieth part— of those of North America, and hence we cannot add much to the industrial, military and political power of the British Empire, in any future race for dominance between the Empire and North America. It is to Australia that our rulers will have to look for the development of the Empire in these respects. But in man-power we beat the rest of the Empire, and therein lies our interest and value. The United States possess "more than one half of the world's coal,"— and twenty times as much as that of Great Britain. Hence Great Britain's interest is to promote to the full her present understanding with her "Kin beyond sea." If this understanding becomes cemented into a permanent alliance, the related peoples will be able to dominate the whole world to their mutual advantage. In our view this is the best way of (what Chamberlain called) *thinking imperially*" and promoting the interests of the British Empire.

* * *

It was Lord Beaconsfield who once declared that "England does not love Coalition." The present coalition of parties and the Coalition Government now in power have prospered, and have also

good prospects before them. The work that has to be done for the prosperity and consolidation of the various parts of the Empire, now that the war has ended, is immense. The great and momentous issues at stake everywhere have to be faced and solved in the interests of the Empire and every part of it, and not to the transient advantage of a political party. The Coalition Government is expected to survive the coming General Election and to serve the great and permament interests already spoken of. Hence, the best men and women in the British Isles must enter the Pariliament and each must render the best service he or she can in it. The mettle of the millions of new voters—chiefly women—will now be tested. England will, we think, learn to love coalitions,—the coalition, or rather the coalescence or unity, of all the peoples of the Empire so as to promote their mutual aid and confidence.

* * *

Indians must not only have an increased and even a predominant voice in the determination of her own affairs and destiny in the future, but a large voice in the control or determination of the joint concerns of the Empire. Unless the inhabitants of the United Kingdom and the British Colonies and Dominions fully realise this fact, the future of the Empire cannot be one of assured growth in power and prosperity. British political or other leaders, and chiefly those who are foremost in active enterprise, must take a large view of the importance of India in the promotion of the common destiny of the Imperial commonwelth. It will not do for great Britishers to adopt narrow views in regard to the interests of India or the numerous sections of its population. They have everything to gain by making India strong and united, and everything to lose by promoting discord and distrust among us so as to give a temporary advantage or notoriety to men bent on promoting their own self-interest at the expense of the enlightened men and sections of all communities who are guided by exalted ideas of national and Imperial patriotism. The policy of *divide et impera* is dead and buried for ever. England and the Empire ought to utilise to the fullest extent both the man-power and the brain-power which abound in India. The power and destiny of the British Empire ought to be, so to speak, *internationalised among all the peoples and races* belonging to it.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme—A Constructive Criticism.

(BY PRAMATHA NATH BOSE)

1.

The illustrious authors firmly believe that India will some day take her "place in the forefront of the world as a self-governing part of the Empire."

The possibility of a partnership presupposed by such a place is open to grave doubt. Abiding partnership is possible only when it is cemented by mutual respect, sympathy and trust. This condition is not fulfilled in the case of India and the other members of the Empire. The qualities which the Indians excel in, and their culture, ideals, and institutions not only do not call forth respect or sympathy from the average Western but are even looked down upon by him with more or less contempt. He views them as so many objects to be exploited, or at best, to be "civilized" with a view to be exploited. They could not command respect with him unless they became a great military and an immensely wealthy nation, or unless he underwent such ethical development as would change his view-point and his outlook on humanity. There is no sign of either at present; and partnership, under present conditions, would only mean for India a share of the heavy burden of taxation, and increased entanglement in the net of Western civilisation without any compensating advantage. Even if possible, it is so very remote and so very contingent that I am inclined to think, it should not be taken into account in practical politics. However that may be, the authors are under the impression that their scheme would do good to the ryot in the near future.

"It will occur to him eventually," they observe "that if landlords are oppressive, and usurers grasping and subordinate officials corrupt he has at his command a better weapon than the *lathi* or the hatchet to redress his wrongs.... Finally he will

come to realise that if he is to deal effectively with the clever and better educated men who represent him in the councils he must acquire learning; and education which he rejected so long as it merely seemed to him to clash with his material interests by depriving him of his children's labour and then unfitting them to follow the plough after him, will acquire in his eyes a new attractiveness when it presents itself to him as a factor in the process of getting better tenure or easier advances for himself."

In the first place, it should be noted that the Indian proletariat are much less prone to resort to physical force to obtain their rights than the Western who, though fairly well represented and enjoying a measure of Responsible Government which cannot be expected in India for a very long time often use weapons of a much more dangerous character than the *lathi* or hatchet. In fact there is hardly any country in the West where parliamentary government has been developed and important concessions have been extorted down to the present day except by means of devastating riots or sanguinary warfare.

Secondly: That the ryot should look forward to the remote future for the redress of his present grievances is a very serious reflection on the present government and on the Civil Service, the *raison d'etre* of whose existence is that they look after the interests of the peasantry, and protect them in a paternal way against the oppression of the other classes. As a matter of fact, it should be mentioned to their credit, that they have been doing their best according to their lights to redress their grievances against private Zamindars and usurers as is evidenced by the various Tenancy Acts. The truth is, the economic situation of the ryot appears to be worst in the ryotwari tracts where Government is the landlord. The fact has been noticed and pressed upon the attention of the Government by various observers, Indian as well as British, official as well as non-official, during the last half century. The following pronouncement by Sir D. E. Wacha is the latest I have come across:

"At present he [the ryot] is said to be a kind of earthen pipkin squeezed between two masterful entities, the revenue officer as the upper entity and the sowcar as the lower. The revenue officer only knows how to grind his own axe in pursuance of the Land Revenue Code which is at once a monument of the legal ingenuity of the State and of the shop-keeping tendencies of the promotion-mongering revenue officers. Until the ryot is lightened of his burden of annual assessment, which in the ryotwari tracts, specially in the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras, are liable to revision every thirty years, it is hopeless to witness any amelioration in the pecuniary condition of the ryot. Opinions differ on this vexed subject, whether the land revenue assessments in all parts of the country are or are not heavy enough in all conscience, and whether the State does not absorb a larger measure of the product of the toiling peasant. They have been wrangling over this problem for the last fifty years at the least, without any definite conclusion. On this subject much might be learnt from the able minute of the late Sir Louis Mallet, written as far back as 1876, when Under-Secretary of State for India. One pertinent extract from it may here be quoted to show how far the Indian system of land revenue assessments is burdensome. 'On the one hand, we see a system which sweeps into the coffers of the State 50 per cent. or more of the net produce of the soil, thus diverting a fund which, in countries where private property is absolute, would, to a great extent, find its way back again into channels of agricultural improvement. But the amount of produce thus diverted is not only large—it is also uncertain. The percentage itself is uncertain, varying with the views of successive governments, and the amount actually assessed, even within the prescribed limits, is uncertain, varying with the accidents of seasons, with the character of the cultivators and with the judgement and knowledge of the settlement service.... There is a marked absence of any adequate accumulation of capital upon the soil and (as a consequence) of any sufficient appropriation of such capital to purposes of agricultural improvement, and deficiency of stocks, of manure, of roads, of tanks, often of seeds, of implement.' Secondly, no attempt has yet been seriously made to diminish to a large extent the burden of the ryots' heavy indebtedness which hangs as a Mill-stone round his neck. Agricultural Relief Legislation in the past in some provinces has been proved to be a comparative failure after many years' operation. The institution of agricultural banks with ample capital in each province can alone relieve that indebtedness in 30 or 40 years. But it is a matter of profound regret that the State has bestowed no serious attention to it, with the object of diminishing this load of debt which has been variously estimated from 250 to 350 million pounds sterling. So far then as to the ills from which the Indian peasantry has been suffering these many years past by reason of the ineptitude of the State in matters agricultural, combined with a neglect of its obvious duty to the peasant. Then, there is the entity of the sowcar or the money-lender. In reality he is the saviour of the peasantry rather than the bloodsucker as he is generally represented to be, seeing that in the agricultural economy of the country he discharges a most useful function, in spite of his usury. One has only to imagine the sorry, nay, most pitiable plight in which the Indian peasantry might have been for years past but for the intervention of this most useful factor in Indian agricultural economy. Where might have been those large exports of staple commodities but for the initial monetary assistance which the money-lender renders to the ryot? and where may have been the "growing land revenue which is deemed the "backbone of Indian finance?" The fundamental relief lies in the direction of lightening the ryots' burden of revenue assessments which are periodically enhanced

under one reason or another, the correctness of which unofficial experts, fully conversant with the condition of the peasantry, have repeatedly challenged. In the Bombay Presidency, some years ago, there had raged a prolonged and bitter controversy on the subject of taxing the improvements made by a ryot at his own cost. Secondly, the institution of land banks which could cautiously advance all the money needed for carrying on ordinary seasonal cultivation. With two such aids, the ryot could diminish his cost of production and the interest charge on his debt thus considerably improving his present most miserable economic condition."

The Report throughout breathes noble sentiments of philanthropy. If the authors really want to do good to the ryot, they could do it at once instead of leaving its precarious accomplishment to the highly problematical consummatian of Responsible Government several centuries hence. His case could not have been put more forcibly than it has been already. If there be any doubt on the subject, one would err on the side of virtue if the benefit of it were given to the ryot Education is to the average ryot a luxury which he cannot think of until he has the means to keep his body and soul together; and it is extremely doubtful how far it would help him to secure "better tenure or easier advances." However, if he desired it, all that the Government could, under existing circumstances, tell him is that he can have as much of it as he liked provided he is willing to pay for it, which practically means he cannot have it.

The honoured place as a self-governing part of the British Empire, even if possible, is such a long way off as to pass into the clouds of dreamland; and the immediate good which the scheme is likely to do is uncertain and suppositive. It is, therefore, highly questionable whether it would be wise and human to plunge the people into the vortex of politics after the Western fashion with but little of its good, and with all its evil to which is to be added the special one of communal representation. The hustings and communal representation would complete the work of degeneration and disintegration which began with the extinction of the village self-government and which is being carried on by the Law Courts. The activities of hare brainsd windbags and shallow-pated inkslingers would be increased a hundredfold. The press and the platform would reverberate with the vitriolic vituperations of the various parties into which Indian society would be divided. The votaries of the religion of enmity would increase many fold and those of the religion of amity would shrink proportionately. There would be discord and dissension where there now is concord and sympathy. There would arise new social pests of the same species as touts and pettifoggers. Bribery and corruption would be rampant. The excise revenue would go up; and assaults and broken limbs (if not broken heads) would be numerous during election time. It is difficult to predict which would be the greater social menace—the purlieus of the law courts teeming with touts and pettifoggers, grog shops filled with topers and canvassers, or lodgings filled with political hucksters, and impecunious drivellers and scribblers circulating lies and scandals and fomenting dissension and enmity.

It will be urged that such is the case in the West also. True. But, in the first place, there the system has been gradually evolved and the people have got used to it, and its evils are to a great extent counterbalanced by a deal of good. Why introduce an admittedly Western evil with but little of the compensating good?

Secondly, there is vast difference between India and the West. What the fate of Western democracy will be in future it is difficult to predict. But whatever it may be, it is a living entity. In India we would have a show of democracy without its substance—a sort of lifeless, soulless, stuffed tiger. In the West communal representation would be unthinkable, and the prospect of exercising the functions of responsible government some day or other exercises a sobering influence on the different parties which will be wanting in India, no one knows for how long. They fight with a definite purpose, and with them the end to some extent justifies the means. The candidates for election here would have to bedraggle themselves through a quagmire of filth—the many attracted by the glamour of seats on the Councils and the influence and prestige which they confer, if not by that of high posts, and the few by the idea that they might perchance influence the decisions of the autocracy. For, they would have but little of real power for an indefinitely long time, may be for centuries.

"One of the most remarkable features of Biritish Rule in India," observes a thought-

ful writer,* "has been that the greatest injuries done to the people of India have taken the outward form of blessings." As I have looked back and looked round, the same conviction has also been forced upon me. I am inclined to think the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme will not prove an exception to the rule.

Suggestion for a worthy War Memorial.

Sir,

The Right Hon'ble Mr. Asquith expressed the pious hope at the historic meeting at Parliament in connection with the Armistice that War may become an anachronism in future. In this he echoed the universal wish. Every one is thinking of plans at this moment for making the coming peace permanent on earth. Anything that should tend towards lessening the chance of falling out between men—whatever might be the source of dissension—was worthy of attention as a means towards the desired end. The steady elimination of *every* element of strife should be the aim of our united efforts. May I ask your powerful aid and sympathy to put before the intelligent public a little idea of mine in this behalf?

Religion is no longer the ruling factor in human affairs it once was. Nevertheless as a motive force of thought and action it is second to none even in the West, while in the East its predominance is maintained to this day. To us Hindus, for example, Religion is still all in all. There is hardly any fear now of nations flying at each other's throat for the sake of Religion. Yet it cannot be denied that sectarian bigotry and religious fanaticism are still things to be reckoned with, not only in the case of backward Orientals but also of fairly advanced Occidentals. It is significant in view of our context that the cleavage in regard to Home Rule in Ireland has followed the line of division in the population according to religious persuasion. Broadly speaking, the difference in the salient national characteristics of Prussia and Austria, the inhabitants of both countries being mainly of the same ethnic stock, is due chiefly to religious causes. One still hears of Jew-baiting here and there in Europe. The Turkish Empire affords a vivid illustration of ceaseless discord between jarring sects and creeds. In our own country, in spite of the ingrained spirit of tolerance of Hindus and Mussalmans alike and the unifying effect of British Rule, painful instances of sectarian bickerings now and again are not wanting. In short, I am sure every one will admit that though Religion has ceased to be the principal cause of conflict in the world it is one of the potent sources of ill-feeling affecting vast populations of almost every grade of intellect.

The primary purpose of Religion, however, is (to repeat a mere truism) to promote the spirit of harmony and brotherliness in mankind by making all races and classes of men realise that they are the children of the Almighty God who is Father of all. It is simply ignorance of the basic tenets and creeds of each other's faith (which are common to all Religions and schools of Theology) which is responsible for keeping alive the smouldering fire of religious animosity that had raged so fiercely everywhere in pre-modern times.

It is obvious, therefore, that we should seek some means of gradually eradicating the root-cause of surviving religious differences as one of the most effective ways of discharging the duty that lies on every one of us of helping towards insuring the establishment of uninterrupted reign of peace and goodwill henceforth on earth. In thinking of measures for making War impossible, you must consider all important causes of discord, as I have said above. You cannot therefore leave out of count the influence of Religion, it being at all events second to none in importance.

My humble suggestion in view of the above is to set up in Benares what I might call a *Hall of All Religions*. I need not dilate upon the indisputable appropriateness of Benares for the location of such a parliament of all sects and creeds. And I need not also explain in so many words why the project is peculiarly suited to the genius, needs and conditions of India. I give below in the barest outline the essen-

* Dr. A. K. Coomaraswami "Essays on Indian Nationalism" p. 96.

tial features of the proposal which, I venture to think, would be a fitting memorial of the War, in that it would be helpful in diffusing the feeling of brotherliness among the followers of different faiths.

First, I would have a Hall to serve as a meeting place for Hindus, (including Sikhs), Mussalmans, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Jews. Of course, the recognised denominations coming under the common name of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Jains, etc., would have equal title to the Hall. The various schools of Dissent such as Brahmos and Arya Samajists among Hindus, and non-conformists of other persuasions, will of course be equally welcome.

Second, a Library (either accommodated in the Hall or in a separate building according to the means and space available) containing the Holy Books and other religious and philosophical works pertaining to all creeds and sects.

Third, places of worship for followers of the various creeds and sects, for example, Hindu and Sikh temples, Islamic musjids, Christian churches, Jain mandirs, Buddhistic vihara or pagoda, Jewish synagogue and so forth.

Fourth, homes for Priests, Ministers, Teachers, etc., of the various creeds and sects.

Fifth, rooms for the accommodation of the students of Comparative Religion and Philosophy. (The incomparable facilities to be offered by such an institution for the direct study of different creeds and philosophies connected therewith, will draw students and enquirers from all parts of the civilized world).

Sixth, offices, servants' quarters, etc.

At first sight the notion may appear as rather Utopian, but it should not be forgotten that the most practical people in the world, the Americans, gave partial effect to the idea in their Parliament of Religions, which was held in the most American city in America—Chicago.

I am told that sufficient land is available in a central situation in Benares and there need be no difficulty in this respect.

I may also add that the Local Committee of the Mahamandal, consisting of the leading Hindu Reises of Benares, is ready to take charge of the works, if my diffident suggestion receive tangible support, the proposed scheme being a manifestation so to say of the ideals and principles of the Sanatana Dharma. Should the leaders of the various Indian communities evince adequate interest in the idea (kindly communicating their approval and advice to the General Secretary of the Mahamandal), the Committee will proceed to form a strong and representative body of influential gentlemen belonging to different communities in Benares and other places to see to the carrying out of the scheme. In the Mahamandal Committee there are two distinguished Engineers (retired Government Officers) who will gladly lend their services.

Yours etc.,
RAMESWAR SINHA,
Maharaja of Durbhanga,
General President of the
Sri Bharata Dharma Mahamandal.

Olla Podrida.

Madras and Bombay have been convulsed for a few days past by agitations. There were scenes of unprecedented enthusiasm. Popular leaders were everywhere applauded, praised, extolled, admired, revered, followed, glorified, adored. There were many red letter days. The people triumphed. And this is the sum of life in the East.

***

Russia has now taken to shooting generals and officers for lack of Czars and Princes and Grand Dukes. Two Generals and 300 officers have been shot in the interests of Russion civilisation. And this is the sum of life in the West. Though Russia has no food there are 16,000 food officials in Petrograd. Does a food official mean an official who will be used as food?

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In regard to the Bijapur case of alleged miracle Mrs. A. B. has come forward again with a mediumistic explanation. She writes: "Any fairly educated and decent disembodied entity can use a body in this way." Decent embodiment indeed!!!

Then she proceeds to talk of the disembodied gentleman slipping into another's body by way of *usurpation.* There is also a mystic reference to Kamaloka and Onija boards. God bless us all!!!

***

Mr. Shinde is conducting services, preaching sermons, and delivering lectures uplifting depressed souls and depressed bodies. It is an elevated world, nowadays, my masters!

***

During the National week there are to be two new Conferences:—the Patel Bill Conference and the All India Women's Conference. All Conferences in the national week are *ipso facto* National Conferences. Mrs. Dorothy Jinaraja Dasa champions the cause of Indian women and says that the 8 million women voters of England will not champion the cause of India unless the Indian women also get the blessing of voting privileges.

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Yet the Editor of The Hindu says in his editorial note in the issue dated 14th December: "Her Excellency (Lady Chelmsford) nowhere admonished her audience to follow in the footsteps of women in Europe who are competing with men in every walk of life...In Europe women have nobly responded to the call for help and now that the peace is in view she will wash off the war paint and bury the hatchet of competition and retire to the sanctity of the home."

***

It is all very funny. Inconsistency! Thy name is modern civilisation. The modern man and woman want to have everything cheap and easy—including happiness here and heaven hereafter. The only and all-sufficing *sadhana* is the vote. Remember the story of Frankenstein.

SCRUTATOR.

THE HINDU MESSAGE will be posted regularly every week to any addess in India, Burma and Ceylon on payment of Rs. 6 only per annum; For all foreign countries within the Postal Union it will be despatched on payment of 10s. 6d. per annum. All subscriptions are payable in advance and should be remitted to the Manager *"The Hindu Message"*, Srirangam.

The Inter-Caste Marriage Bill.

At a largely attended public meeting of the Hindus held on the 17th evening at the Jagannath Temple at Puri under the auspices of the Jagannath Sanatan Dharma Rakshini Sabha a resolution was passed protesting against the Hon. Mr. Patel's Inter-Caste Marriage Bill. Mahant Gadadhar Ramanuuj Das of Emar Math the primier Mahant of Puri, presided at the Meeting. Kumar Shanti Shekhareswar, the Editor of the Ratnakar who moved the resolution in the course of a rousing speech thanked the Maharaja Bahadur of Darbhanga for taking lead in the matter. The leading Mahants, Pandits, pleaders, Pandas, and Sebadas were present. The Sankaracharya of Govardhan Muth who was unable to attend the meeting sent a letter expressing his full sympathy with the protest meeting.

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A Public meeting of up-country Hindus and Marwaris was held on the 22nd evening in Calcutta under the Presidency of the Maharaja of Dharbanga, to protest against Mr. Patel's Bill. The Marwari leaders made strong speeches condemning the proposed Bill as calculated to undermine the foundations of the Hindu Religion and Hindu Civilisation.

Correspondence.

Indian Marriages.

In the matter of Hon'ble Mr. Patel's "Inter Caste Marriage Bill" now introduced into the Imperial Legislative Council it is seen to one's gratification, that enormous protests have been and are being made all over the country by all the *Orthodox and true Hindus* and Hindu Bodies and it is but just in the nature and fitness of things that it should be so; but, to my mind, it appears that the intensity of the efforts made to convince the country and the Government of the extremely undesirable, unnecessary, unjustifiable, unwarranted, unholy, unreligious, unpatriotic, un-orthodox, and above all, pre-eminently *un-Hindu, un-Aryan* character of the proposed Bill introduced by this Hon'ble worthy with a view to earn cheap and gratuitous notoriety indeed:—I say the efforts the Mahamandal and other similar religious and Sanatana Dharmic Bodies are

putting forth, are still very feeble, and must be far more pronounced, emphatic and extensive. That a member of the Imperial Legislative Council who styles himself presumably a Hindu, who wishes to cut a figure, ugly and dismal though in regard to this matter and whose enthusiasm and zeal might as well be shown in any useful cause, without any sort of qualification and warrant, should venture to force a Bill through a Government Legislature,—a Government which, by the way, is rightly, and for ever I believe, pledged to strict neutrality in matters religious and social, (be it noted, there is no social custom and rite without religious solemnity, sanction and significance with the Hindus), and which, yet has in a moment of inexplicable weakness and unconsciousness of its position and pledge has done the grossest blunder of even permitting the Bill to be introduced in the Council of a heterogeneous motley - a procedure which it has had no sort of right to authorise and countenance—,] a Bill which is calculated to subvert the very existence of the Hindu Society, to mar and mutilate it and reduce it to a shapelessness and confusion beyond all possibility of recognition and entity, to wipe it out altogether to be substituted by what?—the Hon'ble Member alone knows—; a Society which dates its origin and construction with God Himself and which has withstood the untold onslaughts and vicissitudes of numberless ages through good times and bad, and which yet retains its essential vitality born of a divine spiritual essence pervading it and permeating it through and through,—a society whose scientific and God-made structure has been so pre-eminently formed as to minister to the religious moral, political, intellectual and economic propensities and activities of man operating in a mood of mutual co-operation and trust and regard for the common weal of the whole organism of the society, each organ doing its duty and enjoying its privilege freely and proudly, subject only to the demands of imperial common interests of the organic society as a whole,—such a society it is which is now proposed to be torn and rent asunder and shattered to wrecks and pieces by the notorious Bill of this Hon'ble worthy; That this *Un-Hindu* gentleman should venture on the uncalled-for scheme which stands to his credit, or discredit, itself remarkably shows to what extent and in what manner, a Hindu so-called, saturated with Westernised views of men and things, with no sense of proportion and self respect and patriotic nationality and carried away by an overwhelming confidence in his own capacity for sound judgment and best wisdom, and misled by the glamour of Western civilization and society (the absolute weaknesses and defects of which are only too manifestly exhibited to the world now-a-days) can become perverse so as to endanger the welfare of the community and wreck it altogether. Such a perverse propensity must be nipped in the bud, in any body, and more so, in the introducer of the Bill holding a responsible position of public trust. The principle of the Bill itself is most nasty and repels any contemplation and thought at all on: This being conceded, it is waste of time and thought and labour to enter into a discussion of the details as to endless evils and confusion that the Bill, if passed, will bring in its wake, making the solidarity of the society a thing of the past, disintegrating and decomposing it beyond cure and contemplation.

To attempt to impose an infliction uncalled for and ungrateful on a law-abiding, highly religious and God-fearing society to satisfy one's own perverse whims and caprices, in the face of distinct instructions of saints and sages, sastras and customs, traditions and interpretations and right against the Divine declaration as to the Divine origin of the Varnasrama and the evils of *Varnasankara* (fusion and commingling of castes); is nothing short of diabolical and he who ventures it should be prepared to endure the universal opprobrium and odium from the very society which he in his highest sense, supposes to serve and ameliorate out of false and mistaken notions.

Even in cattle-breeding, indiscriminate crossing is said to be harmful to the resultant breed and the proposed Bill, in a word, is an attempt to encourage, validate and legalise all cases of no-body's son marrying *anybody's daughter and vice versa.*

Comment on this state of things is palpably needless.

Poona. J. S. RAMACHANDRA SARMA.

Printed and Published by T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar B. A. at the Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam.